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# NATURE STUDY LEAFLET.

# OUR COMMON BIRDS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR

THE STUDY OF THEIR LIFE AND WORK.

BIOLOGY SERIES,
No. 2.

NOT STUFFED.

By
C. F. HODGE, PH. D.,
CLARK UNIVERSITY,
Worcester, Mass.

Food Chart and Drawings by
MISS HELEN A. BALL.

WORCESTER, MASS.:
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JUN 5 1900

# BIOLOGY OF OUR COMMON BIRDS.

By C. F. HODGE, Ph. D., Clark University.

Before genius is manliness and before beauty is power.

—*Burroughs, Birds and Poets, p. 173.*

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

—*Keats, Endymion.*

Cedar bird and nest.

Great human values, of power, of thought, of beauty, attach to a knowledge of our birds; and the larger science, biology, takes them all into account. In elementary and popular education, especially, this wider science should form the solid foundations for all our relations to bird life.

The important question is: What do birds *do* in the world? In striving to answer this question we should also consider what we can do for our birds to render their work as complete and effective as possible. We must first gain by observation and personal acquaintance with the living birds of each species a knowledge of their ways of doing things, their foods, their beauties and their songs. Then give the imagination full play to picture vividly before us what the whole species is doing in every farm and garden and about every home in the land. Think of the millions of beautiful wings and building nests and eating bills and singing throats. Aside from their

Think, every morning when the sun peeps through
The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,
How jubilant the happy birds renew
Their old, melodious madrigals of love!
And when you think of this, remember, too,
'Tis always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

. . . . . .

The summer came, and all the birds were dead;
The days were like hot coals; the very ground
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed
Myriads of caterpillars, and around
The cultivated fields and garden beds
Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
No foe to check their march, till they had made
The land a desert, without leaf or shade.

—*Longfellow, Birds of Killingworth.*

intellectual and æsthetic values the paramount service of the birds lies in their power to destroy insects. For this great work we have a vast mechanism in nature, an army plastic almost as air, on wings, powerful and beautiful, able to carry their literally flying squadrons hundreds and even thousands of miles whither food abounds and insects threaten destruction to vegetation.

In studying living things we should bear constantly in mind this great truth, stated often in the words: "As long as there is life there is hope." In everything that lives there are infinite possibilities. No seed is so tiny but that it may hide the possibility of covering the whole world with plants of its kind. Instead of mourning the loss of our forests, let us go to work. With a single living pine seed, properly cared for by man, we may cover the continent in an incredibly short time with a forest of pines. A pair of living bird's eggs, with proper care by the children of the country, could produce in ten years a pair of birds for every child in the land. Let us consider for a moment the possibilities that lie hidden within the blue shells of a pair of robins' eggs. Allowing that ten young robins may be produced by a pair each year, with the life of a robin as ten years, we shall have .

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st year, | ( 2 + | 10) | 12 robins. |
| 2d " | (12 " | 60) | 72 " |
| 3d " | (72 " | 360) | 432 " |
| 4th " | . | . . | 2,592 " |
| 5th " | . | . . | 15,552 " |
| 6th " | . | . . | 93,312 " |
| 7th " | . | . . | 559,872 " |
| 8th " | . | . | 3,358,232 " |
| 9th " | . | . | 20,149,392 " |
| 10th " | . | . | 120,896,352 " |
| 50th " | 1,616,400,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. | | |

A bird came down the walk:
He did n't know I saw;
He bit an angleworm in halves,
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.
—*Emily Dickinson, Poems, p. 140.*

The winds blow east, the winds blow west,
The blue eggs in the robin's nest
Will soon have wings and beak and breast,
And flutter and fly away.—*Longfellow.*

If we do not have all the robins we want, and this applies to any living thing, it is because we do not know enough about rearing them or are not willing to act in accordance with our knowledge.

In addition to this infinite power of multiplication we must never lose sight of another great law of biology, viz.: that every living thing possesses great possibilities of development and improvement. No one has yet produced the best and most beautiful rose or peach or bird or

man or anything else, that the world is capable of yielding. By proper care we can not only have a world full of such birds as we have now, but of birds with sweeter and sweeter song and more and more beautiful plumage. And in presence of these infinite possibilities for good or for ill we must above all things remember that every human action tends to make the world a garden or a desert, a paradise of joy and beauty or a vale of tears.

To produce and multiply endlessly, without ever reaching the last possibility of excellence, and without committing herself to any end, is the law of Nature.
—*Burroughs, Birds and Poets, p. 180.*

If only the birds we have, felt that they and their nests were safe, they might sing more and even sweeter than they do. Indeed, Burroughs remarks of English birds: "They sing with more confidence and copiousness, and as if they, too, had been touched by civilization." They sing more hours in the day and more days in the year.[1] And, further, if our birds were uniformly safe in man's presence and undisturbed, they would doubtless come much closer to us, as they did to Thoreau, and to Celia Thaxter in her garden. And with proper care many of our best songsters and most useful birds that are now rare, might become more common, filling our parks and the thickly planted portions of our towns and even cities; and with much more caution than preceded the introduction of the English sparrow, we might bring about our homes the most beautiful songsters of other lands. But by far the safer and wiser course, as indicated by our title, will be to begin by making the most of our native birds. These are a heritage infinitely rich, developed through geological epochs to exactly fit all the conditions of life on this continent. It is no light matter to break into this vast living harmony, as our bitter experience with the English sparrow bears ample testimony.

Wood birds here are house and garden birds there (Eng.).—*Burroughs.*

Many haps fall in the field
Seldom seen by wishful eyes;
But all her shows did Nature yield,
To please and win this pilgrim wise.
He saw the partridge drum in the woods;
He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;
He found the tawny thrushes broods;
And the shy hawk did wait for him;
What others did at distance hear,
And guessed within the thicket's gloom,
Was shown to this philosopher,
And at his bidding seemed to come.
—*Emerson, Woodnotes, I, 2.*

With this wonderful power of increase the question naturally arises: Why do we not have many more birds than we find about us? Why have we not hundreds where we have but one? Has the natural

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[1] Burroughs, Fresh Fields, p. 136.

limit of increase been already reached, so that attempts to increase the numbers would be useless? All such questions open up wide and important fields for observation and investigation. Food supply, for all seasons of the year, is the main factor in this great series of problems. This will be considered in a section by itself. The next great factors are natural enemies of bird life. In connection with each element in nature which tends to decrease our valuable bird life, we should endeavor to discover the best means of preventing its operation. That this matter is now a national exigency, in the careful study of which every patriotic citizen and every school child should participate, may be duly appreciated by referring to William T. Hornaday's recent paper[1] on the Destruction of our Birds and Mammals. We learn from this that during the past fifteen years our birds have decreased in thirty states and territories 46%. For each of the states named this decrease has been as stated in table. Three states,—North Carolina, Oregon, and California, show neither increase or decrease; and only four states,—Kansas, Wyoming, Washington and Utah have had an increase of bird life. It would be a most worthy ambition to infuse into our school system, reaching, as it does, the life and heart of every child, the purpose and the will to exert every effort to change this destructive process to one of increase, as rapid as possible, in every state and territory, in every county, farm, and city lot of the land.

What thou art we know not;
  What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
  Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain
    of melody.

Teach us, spright or bird,
  What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
  Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so
    divine.

Teach me half the gladness
  That thy brain must know,
Such melodious madness
  From my lips must flow
The world should listen then, as I am
    listening now.
—*Shelley. To a Skylark.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Maine | 52% |
| New Hampshire | 32 |
| Vermont | 30 |
| Massachusetts, | 27 |
| Rhode Island | 60 |
| Connecticut | 75 |
| New York | 48 |
| New Jersey | 37 |
| Pennsylvania | 51 |
| Ohio, | 38 |
| Indiana | 60 |
| Illinois | 38 |
| Michigan | 23 |
| Wisconsin | 40 |
| Iowa | 37 |
| Missouri | 36 |
| Nebraska | 10 |
| North Dakota | 58 |
| District of Columbia | 33 |
| South Carolina | 32 |
| Georgia | 65 |
| Florida | 77 |
| Mississippi | 37 |
| Louisiana | 55 |
| Arkansas | 50 |
| Texas | 67 |
| Indian Territory | 75 |
| Montana | 75 |
| Colorado | 28 |
| Idaho | 40 |
| Average | 46 |

Climatic influences are severe in this country. Great numbers of birds are killed in heavy rain and hail storms. Whole species are

[1] William T. Hornaday, Director of the N. Y. Zoölogical Park. The Destruction of our Birds and Mammals. Second Annual Report, N. Y. Zoölogical Society. N. Y., 1898. Office of the Society, 69 Wall Street.

decimated in times of sleet and in extraordinarily cold weather within the range of their southern migrations. Thus our bluebirds were killed off in 1895, and fearful havoc has been wrought in a number of our most valuable species in the Southern States during the past winter.[1] With these elements it is difficult to contend. To what extent man is responsible by reason of clearing out natural shelter and destroying natural food supplies it is impossible to say. Again, in times of great drouth in regions where our common species breed, both food and water may become so scarce that numbers of nestlings famish or starve. The birds then are loth to desert their nests to go to regions of plenty. If birds were tamed sufficiently to come to man as their friend in times of great need, as they do in rare cases now, and as they learned to come to Mrs. Brightwen, a little food and shelter might tide them over the hard time, and their service afterwards would repay the outlay a thousand fold. About the house and barn and shade trees, safe places of shelter, crannies arranged on purpose, bird houses, due care being exercised to keep them clear of English sparrows and place them out of the reach of cats, might save great numbers of birds yearly.

Millions of fledglings, the country over, now go to feed vagabond cats. The remedy here is to rid the neighborhood of all such cats; and people who have cats that they value, for love of nature ought to see to it that they are provided with other food than young robins, orioles, thrushes and song sparrows. Much can be done by way of training cats to let the birds alone, and lastly they should be kept in as much as possible at times when young birds in the neighborhood are learning to fly.[2]

In recent years regions have been almost depopulated and whole species practically exterminated for purposes of millinery. The fault here does not rest, as is generally charged, with leaders of fashion or with our good lady friends who wear birds' skins on their hats, but rather with public education and with the ornithologists themselves who know better uses for birds, and who ought to adequately instruct the public instead of scolding and preaching at it.

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[1] See the Auk for April, 1899, note by Arthur T. Wayne, p. 197.

[2] Prof. Forbush states that a cat is generally responsible for about fifty song birds in a year, and one cat to his knowledge destroyed six bird's nests in a single day.

Juvenile collectors of birds' skins, eggs and nests, and careless sportsmen, also stand in need of genuine education. The schools can easily reach the children of the country, and they in turn can carry most potent influences into the homes. Teaching can be made positive rather than negative at every point, can impress the great values attaching to living birds, and set the children actively to work rearing, protecting and taming them, and then stuffed birds and empty egg shells will have very little attraction.[1] The rule used to be that a boy might "take one egg" from a nest. This may not be so bad, where there is only one boy. But boys have multiplied and birds have decreased, hence few eggs are left for the birds, especially about our towns. For a city or town it may not be unwise to have a reference collection of birds' skins, nests and eggs common to the locality; but even here the greatest care is necessary to prevent its furnishing incentive for boys to make similar collections of their own, or supplying excuse for all manner of robbing, any and every boy bringing in "for the Natural History Museum" any and every nest he can find. Collecting, if done at all by killing live birds and eggs, should be done by responsible persons who are capable of realizing that a live bird may be worth a hundred dollars a year to a community; and that all the infinite possibilities for life and action, song, beauty and usefulness are flown when the bird is shot or the egg is blown.

English sparrows are responsible for much decrease among certain of our native birds, especially the most desirable species about our cities and towns. This is the great obstacle that completely blocks the way of doing anything for our native birds. If we put up bird boxes, plant and procure trees for shelter and nesting places, provide food and water, the sparrows will "mob" any bluebird, wren, martin or swallow, drive off, break up the nests and devour the eggs of our robins, catbirds, song sparrows and vireos, and all our trouble will

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[1] In the Upsala Street School, Worcester, Mass., Miss Mary C. Henry, Principal, with a devoted corps of teachers, has been putting this theory to practical test. The boys and girls, to a child, from the primary to highest grade, have been working enthusiastically for protection and increase of birds. The bird census for the second year showed an increase in number of nests of 30%, and people in the neighborhood say that it is for the first time in their memory fit to live in, i. e., free from juvenile vandalism. The children in this school have brought in birds found dead, and these have been mounted, when suitable, for the school collection. This is a legitimate way in which to make collections, if such are desirable.

result in increasing the numbers of this "ruffian in feathers," a bird "too pestiferous to mention." It has been computed that in ten years a single pair of sparrows might increase to 275,716,983,698. What are we to do with this enemy of our valuable native birds? So many differences of opinion and so many delicate points of morals and pedagogy are involved in answering this question that all we can say is let every child study and observe the facts, and with the permission of parents do everything possible to exterminate the sparrows about the premises and neighborhood. It was a dark day for the birds as well as for the people of this country when the English sparrow was introduced. If, instead, a general and well concerted movement had been organized to protect our native species and give them a fair chance to do the work of insect destruction for which our natural conditions had developed them, the country might have been a long way on the road to becoming a paradise.[1]

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[1] Bulletin No. 1, The English Sparrow, U. S. Dep. Agriculture, ought to be readily accessible for reference to every class in nature study. Methods of destroying sparrows that involve suffering, wounding, etc., should be avoided so far as possible. The same is true of methods which advocate destruction of "nests, eggs or young, which I regret to find are favored by the Department of Agriculture. Among the many arguments against this method we may say that a nest is a sacred thing, except to collectors, and its deliberate destruction violates our finest sentiments of home and confidence. I know of cases where the people advocate the merciful extermination of sparrows out of nesting time, but will not allow a nest to be disturbed under their own roof. Recent opposition to attempts to rid Boston of the English sparrow by destruction of "eggs, nest and young" is history in point. I am also obliged, on biological grounds, to differ from the Bulletin on the point of protecting carnivorous birds, like the sparrow hawk, shrike, and screech owl, because, since English sparrows are so shy and cunning, these birds will be feeding largely on the more easily caught native birds which we wish to protect. And further, if they did kill English sparrows in great numbers, in proportion as these become scarce, more and more of our valuable song birds must be taken, until we shall be obliged to make war on the hawks and shrikes.

Practical directions for poisoning sparrows are given on page 174 of the Bulletin, and of the poisons recommended arsenic is least painful as well as best adapted on other accounts. "As an early symptom of arsenic poisoning," Dr. Hare says, "all sensation of pain produced by heat or pinching totally ceases." Poisoning is certainly the most humane and effective method at our disposal, and by its use any northern town or city can easily rid itself of sparrows during a single winter, if a few intelligent friends of our native birds in different parts of the city will take the matter in hand. Those who, in spite of all the evidence in hand, continue to think the English sparrow worthy of protection, should keep them in cages in their own houses and be placed under heavy bonds never to let them out.

## THE BIRD CENSUS.

Chickadee.

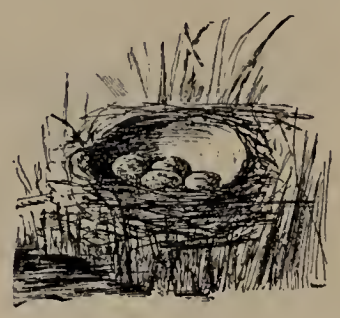
Scarcely any one line of nature study carries so many interesting and important features as that connected with actually keeping track of the number of birds in a neighborhood with a view to increasing the more desirable species in every way possible. The best method of making a bird census is to count the nests in a certain district as soon as the leaves fall in autumn.[1] People generally would find it interesting to do this for their city lots or door yards, and if they would send the results from year to year to their local bird club, to some bird magazine, or to the writer, most valuable data might be gathered as to the hoped for increase of our native birds in different parts of the country. It is helpful for

Chart and census of a city block, Worcester, Mass., for 1898. Stars indicate nests, viz., two robins, one oriole, one chipping sparrow, and one downy woodpecker. Trees, houses and brush are appropriately indicated.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apple | 5 | Maple—one robin | 42 |
| Ash, Mountain | 2 | Oak | 55 |
| Birch | 13 | Peach | 5 |
| Cherry | 9 | Pine, etc. | 95 |
| Chestnut—one woodpecker | 29 | Pear—one robin, one oriole | 38 |
| Elm | 5 | Plum | 7 |
| Hickory | 4 | Others | 6 |
| Hawthorn—one chipping sparrow | 1 | Total number of trees | 316 |

[1] I take pleasure in acknowledging for this valuable suggestion my indebtedness to Professor Frank M. Chapman.

schools, as well as being good geography work, to make a chart or map of the district, with each house, tree, hedge, vine, bush and thicket given its proper place. The separate counting of each kind of tree gives the children a good reason for learning the different species, and, if any bird shows preferences for particular trees, this fact will be brought out. Essays and language lessons may be devoted to discussions and descriptions as to the kind of places the different birds choose to nest in. Drawing should be combined with this, and each schoolroom might contain, either in a case or, possibly even better, hung about the walls and windows, a collection of deserted nests. These the pupils could use for special drawing work and to study as to form and structure, methods used by the birds in building, and materials employed and preferred. Knowledge on all the above points will come to hand in a succeeding section, when we consider especially methods of attracting the birds and of providing for their needs. And surely nothing in all ornithology is better fitted to instill in a child the spirit and the love of bird life than the study of their wonderful nests. If the children were given a course in such study during February or March they could hardly be induced, I should think, to molest a bird's nest the following season.



Song Sparrow.

Bluebird.

## THE FOOD CHART.

A great deal of information, giving at a glance the essence of years of study and hundreds of pages of bird books, has been collected by Miss Ball into the two pages of the chart. We can see for the various birds, so far as is known, just what the species does for man, and what, in turn, we may do for the birds, by way of insuring for them an abundant and inexpensive supply of their preferred foods. Birds have been persecuted and slaughtered for generations because they have been compelled to levy toll in cultivated fruits for their invaluable services. I say compelled, because we have, hitherto, paid

no attention to the natural sources of food supply for our birds, and, in clearing the land, have destroyed, often unnecessarily, the native trees and shrubs upon which they depended. It is now well known that birds much prefer wild to cultivated fruit and that to protect our fruit the most effective and humane way is to leave or plant such wild or valueless fruits as ripen at the same time. In coming to realize how recklessly the country has been stripped, the writer considers it bad biology to even put scarecrows in his cherry trees, to frighten the birds from his garden,[1] until we have planted wild cherries, mulberries and June berries for the birds to feed on. We can find plenty of other things to eat, while the birds cannot. All farms and many gardens and city lots have room for some tree or trees which would furnish food for birds. Our city streets, school yards and public parks might be planted with some regard to this matter most profitably, since in addition to adding pleasing variety it would tend to fill our towns and even cities with our native birds. No less an observer than John Burroughs says: "Indeed the food question seems to be the only serious one with the birds. Give them plenty to eat and no doubt the majority of them would face our winters." And he goes on to describe how a pair of bluebirds and even a mocking bird were induced, by the shelter of his porch and the fruit of a hackberry tree that stood close by, to spend the winter with him eighty miles north of New York. With available room properly planted we might easily have ten wild birds to one that we have now in our towns and even many of our cities. And those who favor the English sparrow because he is the "only bird we have in winter," might soon be consoled abundantly for his absence.

Baltimore Oriole.

The little bird sits at his door in the sun
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings.
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best? —*Lowell.*

Vireo.

[1] Damage to garden fruits by birds is a matter about which we may be greatly mistaken. I have four large cherry trees about the house, and robins have swarmed in them in cherry time; but I have little evidence that they

# FOOD CHART OF OUR COMMON BIRDS.

| | ANIMAL | | | | | | | | VEGETABLE | | | | PESTS | | | | | | | | | | | | SPECIES DESIRABLE TO LEAVE AND PLANT IN ORDER TO ATTRACT BIRDS TO A LOCALITY AND FURNISH FOOD | | | | | | | | | | | |

It would be splendid nature study if all the children in our schools would learn this list of trees, shrubs, and plants. By learning them I do not mean being able to say over their names merely; but they should be able to recognize each at any season of the year; they should know its possibilities of growth for purposes of decoration and ornament; and, most of all, they should study how to propagate each species, so that they can actually plant and have any species anywhere they wish.

Glancing down the first column of the chart we see that certain birds subsist on animal food, insects, worms, etc. These birds are the house wren and cuckoo; and, when it is determined, we may add to this list almost certainly the chickadee, vireos, swallows, swifts, martins and flycatchers. We could not well have too many of these in our insect bepestered country. Another larger class of birds take 50% or over of animal food, but even with the others, as well stated by Wood (Theodore Wood, Our Bird Allies, p 7,), birds that take but a small per cent. of insect food may still destroy insects which would have damaged fruits and crops much more than the birds themselves. Birds that come early, like the bluebird, robin, redwing, and grackle, may be of especial service by destroying insects before they have laid their eggs for the season. A small per cent. of insects to a bird's credit at this time may mean a great deal before the season is over. But, of course, insect destruction is only one of the reasons why we should protect our birds, and there are many others.

For two years now the food chart has occupied a place on the wall of my study. I have had occasion to refer to it many hundred times, and never without learning something that I was glad to know. Still its best service, after all, lies in showing us how little we know about the foods of our birds. Each blank square is really a question, a suggestion to try this or that, and an infinite number of other things not mentioned in the chart, to see whether any particular bird will

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have taken much more than the wormy cherries. The charge is often made that they pick holes in the ripest, finest cherries; but may not these be just the ones that have grubs in them? Last year the way the robins behaved was most interesting and suggestive. They literally stormed the trees by dozens before the cherries were fairly ripe, just as the first premature, wormy cherries were turning red; but after this, for three weeks, while the fruit hung rich and black, I did not see a robin in the trees, and the cherries were remarkably free from worms.

eat it; to find how well they like it. And when a child finds that any bird will eat something which it is not shown to eat in the chart, he may have discovered something which no one else in the world knows.[1] If it be some destructive insect, his observation may be very valuable, and if he tells everybody about it he may lead people to protect the bird more carefully, and so help to *make the world better.*[1]

As years go by and great numbers of our birds become so tame that they will come to us and eat from our hands and allow us to observe them as they hunt their natural foods and feed their young, we may be able to really discover more in this important field, in possibly the next ten years, than man has learned in the 10,000 years preceding. The method of studying living birds in the schoolroom can be made to greatly assist in this work.

## BIRD STUDY IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

Natural history is taught in infant schools by pictures stuck up against walls, and such like mummery. A moment's notice of a redbreast pecking at a winter's hearth is worth it all.—*Wm. Wordsworth, letter to J. H. Rose.*

BIRD HOUSES.

Designed and made, at suggestion of Principal J. Chauncy Lyford, by ninth grade manual training pupils, Winslow Street School, Worcester, Mass. The bird house is now adopted as one of the regular models in the ninth grade manual training course throughout the city.

Wordsworth would have had even less patience with the stuffed caricatures of bird life that we now have in the schools, and he possibly would not have had such contempt for our modern pictures of birds, photographs from life, and reproductions in color. Of the two I certainly feel that the picture in most respects is preferable; and this opinion has been strengthened by the testimony of a number of teachers who say that they do not think the effect of stuffy deadness on the children is wholesome, and that in some cases, even little children

[1] If any such observations are made, it is specially requested that they be sent in to Miss Helen A. Ball, Worcester, Mass., No. 43 Laurel Street. It is hoped to greatly improve aud enlarge the food chart from year to year, as we learn more and more about the food of birds, and it is safe to say that a new copy will be sent to all who contribute information. In this way we may also gather information as to the food of a species in different parts of the country as it has never been done.

protest against this themselves. Pictures stimulate the mind and help the child to see things in real bird life. Stuffed specimens either disgust children with the subject or tend to furnish incentive for them to kill birds and rob nests in order to make collections for themselves. Birds are far too valuable in every way for this, and all teaching should be directed toward so developing knowledge and love of living birds as to completely overwhelm their museum instincts.

An incident which may be told in a few words has suggested a method of bird study which would seem to present great possibilities for good. Last September I picked up a young cedar bird that had fallen in the grass, so gorged with wild cherries as to be unable to fly. I took him in the house, thinking only to keep him a day or two, until his wings grew strong enough to escape prowling cats. During this time, however, he became so tame, seemed so happy and contented, so companionable and withal suggested so many interesting and important problems, as to bird taming, study of bird foods, bird study in schools, etc., that it was decided to retain him for other uses, and now as I write this he is sitting contentedly on my shoulder preening his feathers and tinkling his delicate little "whisper songs" into my ear. Methods of taming birds will form a section by itself. Interest in food problems began by noticing that he very soon began catching flies on the window pane. A net full of flies was brought in and he took 78, all there were, as fast as they could be given him, and then ate poke berries for dessert. The food chart was of great assistance in showing just what the cedar bird is known to eat. Besides the foods indicated on the chart, however, he was found to take cabbage worms, edema larvæ, flies, ants, fall web worms (a little sparingly), bush cranberries. No attempt was made to follow up the matter, as my time was occupied with other things. It serves to demonstrate how easy it may be for a child to discover things of real importance in bird life about him.

The bird was taken first to the zoölogy class in the high school. The pupils ransacked the city for insects with which to make feeding tests, and hunted especially for elm beetles in order to discover how many of these pests a cedar bird could consume in a day. For a time in the late summer elm beetles were abundant and in certain localities did considerable damage to the foliage. The cedar birds also appeared in numbers and this may account for the fact that practically no elm beetles could be found by the class in September and October. The

cedar birds and phœbes are the only birds on our food chart which are known to destroy the elm beetle, and it is quite possible that they have rendered this service, at least in Worcester, in their own quiet way. If this be so, it is certainly better than steam spray pumps and large appropriations of money could have done and the people should know and value their benefactors accordingly. But there were no end of other insects found and tested and the teacher, Miss Goddard, reported that the pupils "seem to think it great fun and the scheme seems to be working much better than I thought possible, when you suggested it. The little cedar bird seems well and happy and his appetite for flies seems to have returned again. He refused them for a day or two after his arrival. He looks so wise, we call him the professor."

After "teaching" thus in the high school the bird was sent the rounds of the kindergartens. Here he was often given the freedom of the room, flitting from child to child and feeding from their hands. The children took delight in bringing food and made little excursions to hunt berries, "so the bird could have some dinner." Miss Rood, the teacher of one of the kindergartens, has kindly noted down for me the children's sayings and points of general interest. "One little girl was so afraid that she would cry if the bird came near her ; but she soon became so fond of him that her first question in the morning was whether he might not be let out of his cage. A very little girl said : 'He flies around us so as to know us.' A little boy said : 'He likes us 'cause we like him.' He pecked at our hair and the children let him, saying : 'He must have some hair to build his house with.' After he left us the children asked every day for a week for him. When I said, perhaps we could take him again, they asked me : 'Will you ask the man to-day. Ask him, *please*, may we take him?' 'Ask him, can we keep him a long time ; for he loves us?'"

Thousands of young birds every year leave their nests a day or two before their wings are quite strong and fall an easy prey to cats. I wish every child might be taught to keep a sharp lookout for such unfortunates and whenever found, protect them for a few days, until able to fly. They may be simply placed in a cage near the nest and often the old birds will continue to feed them. If not, they should be fed and watered regularly about every hour during daylight until they become able to help themselves. As to retaining them in captivity longer than necessary for their own safety, no better rule can be fol-

lowed than that of Olive Thorne Miller, which is, to liberate a bird as soon as it becomes evident that it is not possible to render it happy and contented. With careful observation of this rule common objections to caged birds fall to the ground, and it would seem that a few of each species might serve a higher purpose than that of food for cats if they were tamed so as to be happy and companionable, and brought into our schools to teach the children, from actual life, all their calls, notes, and songs, their habits and manners, and beauties of plumage and action, all about their foods and their possibilities for destroying insect pests. And we might even have them building their nests and rearing their broods on the window sills. This may seem impossible; but many of our common birds will nest in captivity. Suppose we have a pair of robins. If fed well and supplied with a crotch and material for building, they would doubtless build their nest, and if, after the eggs were laid, the whole were set outside the nearest shady window and securely fastened there, they might be given their liberty and would rear their brood under the eyes of the whole school. What stories might be read in this way from real bird life. In a few years birds might be flying into our open windows to sing to us, as they did for Mrs. Brightwen.

## TAMING OUR WILD BIRDS AND ATTRACTING THEM TO OUR HOMES.

> He is so tame he never stirs from his twig for anybody, no matter how near a person may come; he alights on arms and hands and hair unafraid; he rifles the flowers I hold when I am gathering them, and I sometimes think he is the very most charming thing in the garden. I shall never forget the surprise of joy that filled me when one for the first time alighted on my sleeve and rested, as much at home as if I were a stick or a harmless twig. Sparrows and nut-hatches had often alighted on my head as I stood musing over my flowers, perfectly still, but to have this tiny spark of brilliant life come to anchor, as it were, on anything so earthly as my arm was indeed a nine days' wonder. Now it has grown to be an old story, but it is never any less delightful.—*Celia Thaxter, An Island Garden, p. 111. Description of her humming-birds.*

> Let but a bird—that being so free and uncontrolled, which with one stroke of the wing puts space between you and himself—let him but be willing to draw near and conclude a friendship with you, and lo, how your heart is moved! No one can be insensible to the claim which confidence imposes; it is, so to speak, a freeman's right. The stork of the north builds its nest on your roof, and everybody envies you, and seeks the same favor in the coming spring. The swallow of the south makes our open house her own, and joy enters with her; her presence is a promise of happiness.—*Mme. Michelet, Nature, p. 39.*

Any one who can resist the monkey-like impulse to "grab" can easily tame a bird; at any rate, a young one. Birds' feathers are far too

delicate and beautiful to be handled with human fingers, and birds think too much of them and spend too much time combing and brushing and preening and washing and smoothing them to allow of their being roughly handled.

As a general rule in bird taming we should handle birds or rather allow them to handle (footle) us, solely by their feet. And when this rule is learned it is surprising how easily a bird may be induced to come to us and perch on our fingers. When all danger of their becoming frightened and fluttering is past, the hand may be gently closed over them and they may even enjoy being squeezed a little. My cedar-bird has reached this stage, at least when he is cold, and others have found this true; but it only applies to birds when they have become perfectly tame.[1]

Suppose we have a bird to tame, just how shall we go about it? We will place it in a clean cage, supply it with water and such food as the food chart may indicate for the time of year. We will be careful not to frighten it for the first day, while we study among its different foods the one it likes best. By the morning of the second day, when all the food in the cage

[1] The charming little story of taming a vireo, in Bird World (Ginn & Co., 1898, pp. 106,), and also Caroline Crowninshield Bascom's "Story of Little Billee." (Birds and all Nature, 1899, p. 49.) "He (Little Billee, a pet bird,) loves to visit my mother in her room, and is very happy while walking all over her, but she has never yet been able to touch him. He seems to have eyes all over his head, for no matter how careful she is, he always sees the finger. He thoroughly enjoys my squeezing him in my hand and kissing him over and over again."

has been eaten or removed, we will stick the favorite berry or insect on the end of a slender wand, it may have to be five or six feet long at first, and gently approach, until the morsel is in reach of his bill. If he takes it, try another, moving up a little closer. If not, let its appetite sharpen a little, or get a longer stick. By this method, and a little wholesome patience, any young bird can be tamed in three days to take things from your hand. With a pair of mocking birds, trapped birds and so wild that they would go into a frenzy of fluttering if I even entered the room, my first feeding was, mealworms on a stick, at six feet, my second at one foot, third, fourth and fifth, ditto, the sixth from the hand. Very soon I could simply place the worm on my table before me and they would boldly fly out of the cage and pounce upon it. But they are a proud, imperious bird, and always come toward me with wing raised ready to strike, with an expression of face which says, "I will eat you raw, sir, if you dare move a finger." And I pretend to be a little afraid of him, which is a bit of harmless deception. This latter trick is one I have used from childhood, and it is well described in the first chapter of Mrs. Treat's book, "Home Studies in Nature." The fact is there are a number of little knacks and tacts which it is difficult or unnecessary to describe. Perhaps the most important is with reference to the way we use our eyes when trying to tame a bird. Birds' eyes are probably much keener than our own, and they undoubtedly are able to read our faces. We must not stare and glare at them like cats or snakes trying to charm them. Glance at them pleasantly, then turn the eyes away, pretend to be looking or thinking about something else and their nervous tension is immediately relaxed. It is not considered polite to stare even at your friends.

The next step in bird taming is not generally a difficult one. Keep your bird's appetite sharp and healthy, and then find some food of which it is desperately fond. It was peppermint drops with my little cedarbird at first. With mocking birds, it is mealworms and spiders, and for robins, probably earthworms, and, according to Stickney, for vireos it may be black ants. When you have discovered it for your bird, you can soon have him flying after you from room to room, picking at your fingers or lips. Another little matter of tact is to have notes and calls, either spoken or whistled, and if possible, somewhat resembling the call notes of your bird, not the war cries or notes of alarm. Use these cheerfully on entering the room and while

feeding and caring for the bird. It is a sign of acquaintance when he begins to answer you back. Sometimes my birds will flutter violently when I enter the room, especially in a dim light, but cease instantly when the note of greeting and assurance is given. Birds in life make so much of notes and calls that they naturally play an important role in taming. This serves also as an excellent reason for learning bird notes and calls.

I give these hints in some detail, because I wish all children might be led to use them in their relations to birds, not only in confinement but especially out of doors, as well. Those who have not tried it can have no idea of the pure enjoyment, both for the birds and ourselves, which wait upon this kind of bird study. It is something that everybody can and ought to do. Bird collecting and skinning and stuffing is at best but sad drudgery, and I speak from dreary, though in many respects successful, experience. I hope almost enough of it has been done to last the country for the next thousand years, and what remains should be done by experts and the results should be preserved in moth-proof tin boxes in museums and not on exhibition; for scientific reference and not for show. Bird study afield or through an opera glass is at best for the few who have money and leisure. Like the flowers of our homes this kind of bird study, which aims to attract birds about our homes, should become part of our ordinary home life, an equal delight to parents and children, rich and poor, busy and idle, alike. Mrs. Treat has testified as to the satisfactions of such bird study as follows: "There is a keen sense of enjoyment — I might say, of exalted happiness — in being able to bring the free birds of the grove around one, which well repays for the time and patience and hermit-like life necessary to accomplish it." (Home Studies in Nature, 1885, p. 27.)

After four years of pleasure, "exalted happiness," we will not call it work, in attracting birds to her home she is able to report 27 nests on her lot, "several of them in close proximity to the house." Mrs. Treat has not "dropped" the study. Indeed, I doubt if any one really begins this study, that they ever could "drop" it. Under date of January 23, 1899, she writes me that twenty-five species have nested about her place. Of these she says, "The catbirds have become tamer than any other birds. I have had a pair so tame that they would eat from my hand and follow me into the house. The brown

thrush, too, has become very tame, bringing its young to the door to be fed. Song sparrows and chippies are also wonderfully tame.''

People buy birds and go to the expense and care of keeping them in cages. How much more is it worth to have a pair of free birds come and nest by your window, to have them sing to you the season through, and show you all the secrets of their family life and wonderful housekeeping. Four of my friends have kindly given me estimates as to how much they would be willing to give a year to have thus a pair of the following birds. We may compare the figures with Holden's prices for choice songsters of the same species.[1]

| Bird. | Estimated Value. | | | | Holden's Price. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1st. | 2nd. | 3rd. | 4th. | |
| Brown Thrasher, | $5 | $3 | $3 | $8 | $5 to $ 8 |
| Catbird, | 1 | 1 | .75 | 1 | 5 " 10 |
| Tanager, | 1 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 3 " 5 |
| Grosbeak, | 1 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 5 " 8 |
| Robin, | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 " 5 |
| Bobolink, | 2 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 2 " 3 |
| Orioles, | 6 | 4 | 3.50 | 3 | 5 |
| Chickadee, | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | — — |
| Bluebird, | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | — — |
| Mocking bird (not thought of as a possibility), | | | | | 3.50 " 50 |

The problem of attracting birds about our homes is one which might well interest every child and household in the land. It is a subject about which books do not tell us much, hence all the better calculated to stimulate ingenuity and imagination and reward every step with the delight of experiment and discovery. It is at bottom the problem of finding out all necessaries of bird life and supplying such as may be lacking. Food, water, and homes are the prime essentials. Insect food is generally superabundant, but may need to be supplemented at times, as already suggested. Excellent general directions

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[1] I had hoped to place along side of the æsthetic value, the economic value of the different birds; but our highest authorities in ornithology tell us that this is not known for a single bird. If a toad may be worth $19.88 each season for cutworms alone which it destroys (Kirkland's estimate. The Common Toad, Bulletin No. 46, Hatch Experiment Station, Amherst, Mass.,), many of our birds, like the chickadee, swallow, wren, robin, and others, must be worth much more.

for this are given in Florence Mirriam's Birds of Village and Field, in connection with an account of Mrs. Davenport's interesting experiences with the "window shelf." A board by the window for crumbs and all sorts of bird foods appropriate to the seasons should become as much a household institution as the window garden inside, and promises to be a source of even more interest and pleasure. Here, again, the English sparrow is the great obstacle, but, with proper precautions and supervision, the window shelf may become a most efficient means of ridding our towns and cities of this most ubiquitous of pests.

Meadow Lark.

Water may be supplied by placing a shallow dish, always kept fresh and clean, on a short post under a tree, merely high enough up to be out of reach of cats. The water should not be more than two inches deep. Few people who have not tried it can have any idea of the satisfaction there is in seeing the thirsty birds come down to bathe and drink. For three years past I have had one by my study window, and at the present moment a robin is making the water fly in every direction. The next comer is an English sparrow, and the next and the next and the next two English sparrows, but while they are with us we should not wish them to be thirsty, and the next is a female robin, the next a red-eyed vireo, the next an English sparrow, all within fifteen minutes, and so it goes in the noon hour whenever I have time to watch. Nothing adds more to comfort of birds in hot weather.

To supply homes, nesting places, and materials for nests is a most fascinating study. Trees may be pruned to make inviting crotches, and a dark tangle of bushes overgrown with vines and sunflowers, dense lilac bushes or a "syringa thicket," will be sure to attract catbirds, brown thrashers and some others. Bird houses furnish homes for wrens, bluebirds, chickadees, tree swallows and purple martins, but here, again, English sparrows are the omnipresent nuisance and must be served frequent notice to quit the premises. The proper size for a bird house is six inches square floor space and eight inches high, and houses of more than one compartment may be made by cutting

Alas, dear friend, that, all my days,
Hast poured from that syringa thicket
The quaintly discontinuous lays
To which I hold a season ticket.

A season ticket cheaply bought
With a dessert of pilfered berries,
And who so oft my soul hast caught
With morn and evening voluntaries.
—*Lowell, Nightingale in The Study.*

the boards in multiples of these numbers. Old weathered boards should be used, or, if painted, they should be made the color of an old tree trunk. A single opening near the top should be made, two inches in diameter for most birds; although, for wrens and chickadees, one inch is sufficient and will serve to keep out the English sparrow, and for wrens they should be set in a shady place.

Both wrens and chickadees are most valuable birds. Besides being a cheery songster and a most sprightly and fascinating fellow, the wren depends for practically his whole food supply upon the insects of our grounds and gardens. While wrens have become quite scarce of late years about our towns and cities, driven out probably by English sparrows, a few of the children in Worcester have reported them as occupying their bird houses, and, no doubt, we may soon have them common again if we supply plenty of sparrow-proof homes and get rid of the sparrows. Probably no bird possesses a higher economic value than the chickadee. All summer he feeds on insects and all winter on the eggs which they lay on the twigs and bark and around the buds of trees. Professor Forbush reports finding 5,500 eggs of plant lice in the crop of a chickadee, this number representing what the bird had gathered for a single breakfast. When heavy snow and, especially, sleet covers the trees, be sure to see that your chickadees are provided with food. A fresh bone with marrow and meat on it, or a piece of suet fastened to the limb of a tree and kept free from ice from time to time, may save dozens of these precious little lives during a winter. Chickadees are also one of our cheeriest and tamest birds and we could not have too many of them about our homes.

Among the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

. . . . . .

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.
—*Wordsworth, The Wren's Nest.*

This poet, though he live apart,
Moved by his hospitable heart,
Sped, when I passed his sylvan fort,
To do the honors of his court
As fits a feathered lord of land;
Flew near, with soft wing grazed my hand. —*Emerson, The Titmouse.*

Further on we found what we were chiefly looking for, a flock of lively little chickadees. . . . They would light on our hands, inspect the pieces of crushed nut, knock off the ones that did not suit them, and finally fly off with one, usually the largest. —*Floyd C. Noble, aged 14, Bird Lore, I, p. 58.*

On two occasions, chickadees have flown down and perched upon my hand. During the few seconds they remained there I became rigid with the emotion of this novel experience. It was a mark of confidence which seemed to initiate me into the ranks of woodland dwellers.
—*Chapman, Handbook, p. 390.*

Note also Chapman's The Legend of the Salt, Bird Lore, Vol. I, p. 55.

For swallows every barn, and, I am tempted to say, house attic as well, should be provided with a hole high up in the gables, which

can be left open the whole year, or, at least, all the time the swallows are with us. This is a custom of our fathers which should not be permitted to lapse. Old barns are sometimes seen with this wise provision, but it is seldom, if ever found in the new ones that are fast taking their places.[1]

Barn Swallow's Nest.

Gentle swallow, thou we know
Every year dost come and go;
In the spring thy nest thou mak'st;
In the winter it forsak'st,
And divert'st thyself awhile
Near the Memphian towers, or Nile.
—*Anacreon, XXXV, p. 89, Stanley's Translation.* (*B. C. 562.*)

The Indians, even, used to hang gourds to their wigwam poles for the martins.

As the old barns fell to ruin,
New ones, raised to take their places,
Lacked the broad and generous shelter
Which the eaves had once afforded
To the owners of the mud huts,
To the swallows of the Saco.

Weary-winged, from distant Southlands,
In the spring have come the swallows,
Seeking hopefully their nestings,
Seeking eaves and sun-warmed barnsides;
Come and found the crackless clapboards,
Come and found ill-odored pigments,
Come and found new barns for old ones,
Come and found no eaves for shelter,
Come with joy and met with sorrow,
Seeking vainly for old barn sides
Changeless as the cliffs of Paugus.

Weary-winged, the homeless swallows
Flutter on into the darkness—
Whither going? That they know not.
But 't is certain that the Saco,
That the lonely cliffs of Paugus,
That the steeps below Chocorua,
Do not bear their cosy dwellings.
Years ago, on man depending,
Mother swallows taught their nestlings
Barns alone were made to build on—
Barns have failed them, man betrayed them.
—*Bolles, Chocorua's Tenants.*

As well suppose the trees without leaves as the summer air without swallows. Ever since of old time the Greeks went round from house to house in spring singing the swallow song, these birds have been looked upon as the friends of man, and almost as the very givers of the sunshine. . . . The beautiful swallows, be tender with them, for they symbol all that is best in nature and all that is best in our hearts.
—*Jeffries, Field and Hedgerow, p. 100.*

Then out of the high heaven above, at once one hears the happy chorus of the barn swallows; they come rejoicing, their swift wings cleave the blue, they fill the air with woven melody of grace and music. Till late August they remain. Like the martins, their note is pure joy; there is no coloring of sadness in any sound they make. The sandpiper's note is pensive with all its sweetness; there is a quality of thoughtfulness, as it were, in the voice of the song sparrow; the robin has many cadences; in the fairy bugling of the oriole there is a triumphant richness, but not such pure delight; the blackbird's call is keen and sweet, but not so glad; and the bobolink, when he shakes those brilliant jewels of sound from his bright throat, is always the prince of jokers, full of fun, but not so happy as comical. The swallow's twittering seems an expression of unalloyed rapture,—I should select it from the songs of all the birds I know as the voice of unshadowed gladness.
—*Celia Thaxter, Island Garden, p. 22.*

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[1] The nest in the margin was taken from such an old barn, with swallow holes in the peak, belonging to Elliott Moore of Worcester, and the swallows have nested in it regularly for many years. Paint and planed lumber are fast making our buildings impossible for swallows. A case has recently come to my knowledge, and they are doubtless numerous, where the nests of a large colony of eave swallows were scraped down in order to paint a barn. They deserted the place and have never returned. It would certainly pay to tack a *rough* board along under the eaves of barns to attract colonies of this most valuable bird.

The Greeks celebrated the swallows in poetry and song as early as the dawn of authentic history. We cannot afford to let these long, deep lines of poetry, sentiment and human good fail from our lives. I have heard complaints that our barn swallows are becoming scarce, as though it were due to some inevitable change in natural conditions. Look at our barns and the whole matter is explained. Provide *homes*, wherever this has been neglected, and they will soon be numerous again. It was indeed a pathetic thing to see, as I did recently, a fine colony of barn swallows flying round and round a large barn, examining every knot, clinging about the too well-glazed windows, unable to find an entrance. Farmers should realize the gallons of stock blood, and human as well, and the hot days of pestiferous suffering and annoyance from flies, gnats and mosquitoes which a beautiful colony of swallows would save.

> This guest of Summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> By his lov'd masonry, that heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here. . . .
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
> The air is delicate.
>
> —*Shakespeare, Macbeth.*

> All the summer long the swallow is a most instructive pattern of unwearied industry and affection. . . . The swallow is a delicate songster.—*Gilbert White, Selborne, 1767, p. 5, Vol. II.*

The purple martin has been practically driven from our towns and cities by the English sparrows. It should be considered no mean public service to keep a suitable house clear of sparrows for these beautiful birds; and it gives me rare pleasure to acknowledge my own debt in this matter to Mr. Loring Coes, of Worcester, who has, by dint of shooting several houses to pieces, retained a fine colony within the limits of our city. The bird house for purple martins should be placed on a pole some distance from trees and buildings, and the openings may be three inches in diameter.[1]

The little chimney swift and the night hawk are birds of wonderful power and usefulness in sweeping the air clear of insect pests. Both have applied for homes in our cities and should be most carefully

[1] It is often stated that purple martins are becoming rare, English sparrows being generally given as the cause. This is probably true in the main, since the sparrows nest before the martins come north, and especially because the sparrow nuisance has discouraged people from providing martin houses. That suitable houses for martins may be, however, at the bottom of the difficulty is indicated by the fact that a martin house, erected in Worcester, May 1, became within three weeks the home of seven pair of these "rare" birds. Within limits of food supply, we can doubtless have as many purple martins as we furnish with sparrow-free houses.

protected. The night hawks nest on the flat roofs of buildings and the swifts in unused chimneys. The swifts nest in colonies in the same chimneys and are often killed in great numbers by starting fires during cold weather in early summer. Great care should be exercised to avoid this whenever possible.

To one awakened at morning and cheered at evening by their songs through years of childhood, robins (not in pot-pies) are necessaries of life. No summer is complete without a pair of these rollicking birds nesting about the house. But how to induce a pair of wild robins to do this is a problem, most fascinating, but as yet almost wholly unsolved. I have tried putting up, in attractive crotches, imitation robins' nests, constructed of mud mixed with moss, twigs, grass, strings and rootlets (4¼ inches by 4 by 2 inches deep), but no robin has proved selfish enough to appropriate them. However, I had no robins' nests on the lot for three years; on placing two of these nests, a pair of robins did build *near* each. That was last season. This year, wishing to test the matter further, I did not place any imitation nests, and all the nests had been washed away by severe storms, and no robins have nested on the lot, although a pair has built not far away. Next year I shall try the dummy nests again. In very dry weather, or where mud is not easily obtained, it is a good plan to keep a pan of mud on the post with the birds' watering dish. Mrs. Treat has described how robins take mud for their nests from her flower pots, and Olive Thorne Miller relates that a female robin has been known to dip herself in water, fly directly into the dust of the street and then pick off the mud from her feet and feathers. When it comes to this, we may be sure that a little help will be appreciated. Several children in the Worcester Ten to One Clubs have put out pans of mud and have been greatly delighted in a number of cases by seeing robins come and carry the mud away. But I hope the one who first discovers how to make a nook so inviting that a pair of robins cannot resist the temptation to build their nest in it will tell me, and every one else, all about it.

It is almost as hard to do without orioles and vireos and a host of others, and if plenty of nesting material be provided at the proper

If every bird has his vocation, as a poetical French writer suggests, that of the American robin must be to inspire cheerfulness and contentment in men. His joyous "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheery! Be cheery!" poured out in the early morning from the top branch of the highest tree in the neighborhood, is one of the most stimulating sounds of spring.

Besides admonishing others to cheerfulness, the robin sets the example. Not only is his cheering voice the first in the morning and the last at night,—of the day-birds,—but no rain is wet enough to dampen his spirits.—*Olive Thorne Miller, In Nesting Time, p. 2.*

time, it is perhaps easier to attract these birds than almost any others. They can build in almost any tree and find food in every garden and orchard. Hence abundance of nesting material, linen and cotton thread and strings, store twine, yarn or tow, may decide a pair to build on the spot. A little hair for a chipping sparrow is another thing not to be forgotten, and plenty of honeysuckles and other nectar-bearing flowers will be sure to attract humming birds.

A rout of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald,
A rush of cochineal;
And every blossom on the vine
Adjusts her tumbled head—
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning ride.
—*Emily Dickinson, 2d Series, 130.*

A flash of harmless lightning,
A mist of rainbow dyes,
The burnished sunbeams brightening
From flower to flower he flies.
While wakes the nodding blossom,
But just too late to see
What lip hath touched her bosom
And drained her rosary.
—*John B. Tabb, p. 59.*

Whatever we do to attract a pair of birds to nest on the premises must be done, of course, at the proper time, and to this end we should know especially when each species *begins to nest*, and our preparations should be made a week or two before this occurs. The following table, which we may call a Life Chart of a few of our commoner species, may serve to bring a number of points of interest together in convenient form for reference. It would be well if a table of this kind could be constructed each year by classes in nature study for each locality. This would bring out variations in season from year to year and define these periods more exactly, and so furnish incentive and guidance to active work of supplying homes and nesting materials and of saving the fledglings from cats. Here, too, the blank spaces under period of incubation and length of time the young remain in the nest form the most interesting part of the table, from the fact that any child with opportunity and a little patience may fill them in.

## LIFE CHART OF OUR COMMON BIRDS. (LATITUDE OF NEW YORK.)

| | Arrive. | Depart. | No. of broods. | Begins to nest. | Incubation. Days. | Young remain in nest. Days. | Nest. | | | Eggs. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Location. | Height Feet. | Material. | Number. | Color, etc. |
| Bluebird | A few resident Mar | Nov | 2–3 | Early May. | 12 | ..... | Hollow in tree or box | 4–10 | Grass | 4–6 | Pale blue. |
| Robin | A few resident Mar | Oct., Nov. | 2–3 | May | 12 | ..... | Crotch of tree | 5–15 | Rootlets, grass, mud.. | 3–5 | Greenish blue |
| Wood Thrush | May | Oct | 2–? | Late May .. | 12 | ..... | In sapling ... | 8 | Rootlets, mud, fine grass | 3–5 | Greenish blue |
| Brown Thrasher | Apr., late... | Oct., late... | 1 or 2 | May early.. | ..... | ..... | Low thick bushes or on ground. | 0–5 | Twigs, rootlets. | 3–6 | Greyish white, finely speckled with cinnamon. |
| Catbird | Apr., late... | Oct., late... | 2–? | May early.. | ..... | ..... | Thicket or dense tree .. | 3–30 | Twigs, leaves, grass, rootlets | 3–5 | Dark greenish blue. |
| House Wren | Apr., late... | Oct., mid... | 3 | May early.. | ..... | ..... | Hollow tree, box or cranny | 1–? | Twigs, grass | 6–8 | Wine or flesh colored, finely speckled. |
| Chickadee | Resident | ..... | 2 | May early.. | ..... | ..... | Hollow trees, birch stubs.. | 4–20 | Moss, grass, feathers, plant down | 6–8 | White, spotted and speckled with br'n. |
| Vireos | May | Oct., late... | 1 | May early.. | ..... | ..... | Pensile in fork of branch. . | 15–70 | Bark fibers, paper, plant down | 3–4 | White, black spots on larger end. |
| Cedarbird | Resident | ..... | 1 | June–Oct... | ..... | ..... | Fruit and shade trees.. | 3–25 | Twigs, bark, grasses, leaves, moss, rootlets | 3–5 | Pale bluish green, spotted with dark. |
| Swallows Barn | Mid-Apr ... | | | | | | On rafters, etc. | | Mud, twigs, grass, feathers. | 4–6 | White, spotted with brownish. |
| Swallows Eve. | Apr. | Sept., mid.. | 2 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ledges, eaves, holes in trees, | | | | |
| Swallows Tree | Apr. | Oct. | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | bird houses ... | ..... | Mud, twigs, grass, feathers. | 4–7 | White. |
| Purple Martin | Apr. | Sept., mid.. | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | Bird houses clear of trees | ..... | Straws, twigs. | 4–5 | White. |
| Tanager | May | Oct., early.. | 1 | Late May .. | ..... | ..... | Trees. | 3–20 | Twigs, weed stems, tendrils | 3–4 | Pale bluish or greenish white, brownish markings. |
| Grosbeak | May, early. | Oct., early.. | 1 | ..... | ..... | ..... | Bushes or trees | 5–20 | Fine twigs, rootlets .. | 4–5 | Pale blue with brown markings. |
| Orioles | May 1 | Sept. 1 | 1 | Mid-May. Worc. 1899 | 14 | 14 | Pendant from branches ... | 8–50 | String, hair, plant fibers. | 4–6 | White, with dark scrawls and blotches. |
| Bobolink | May | Oct., early.. | 1 | June 1. | ..... | ..... | On ground, in in grass | ..... | Grasses | 4–7 | Greyish white, with brownish spois and blotches. |
| Kingbird | Apr., late... | Sept., early. | 1 (2?) | May early.. | 12–13 | 14 | Trees | 4–40 | Weeds, grass, moss, plant down, rootlets | 3–5 | White, spotted with umber. |
| Phœbe | Mar., mid.. | Oct., last... | 2 | May early.. | 12 | 14 | On beams or ledges | 6–20 | Moss, mud, hairs | 4–6 | White, rarely spotted with brown. |
| Cuckoo, B. B. | May, early.. | Oct., late... | 2 | Mid-May .. | ..... | ..... | Low trees or vine-covered bushes. | 4 10 | Sticks, grass | 3–5 | Pale bluish green. |
| Chipp'g Sparrow | Apr. 9 | Nov. 7 | ..... | Mid-May .. | ..... | ..... | Bushes and trees | 5–20 | Twigs, grasses, rootlets, hairs | 4–6 | Bluish, brownish markings. |
| Song Sparrow | Resident | ..... | ..... | May 1 | ..... | ..... | On gr'nd, rarely on bushes. | ..... | Grasses, dead leaves, bark | 4–6 | White, or bluish white, covered with brownish markings. |

## TEN TO ONE CLUBS.

Beloved of children, bards and Spring,
O birds, your perfect virtues bring,
Your song, your forms, your rhythmic flight,
Your manners for the heart's delight,
Nestle in hedge, or barn or roof,
Here weave your chamber weather-proof,
Forgive our harms, and condescend
To man as to a lubber friend,
And generous, teach his awkward race
Courage and probity and grace!

—*Emerson, May-day.*

No longer now the wing'd habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And preen their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
. . . . . happiness
And science dawn, though late, upon the earth.

—*Shelley, Daemon of the World.*

Anything that a man can avoid doing under the notion that it is bad, he may also avoid under the notion that something else is good. . . . Wean them (school children) from their native cruelty by imparting to them some of your own positive sympathy with an animal's inner springs of joy.

—*James, Talks to Teachers, Atlantic, 1899, p. 625.*

The relations which our child population shall assume towards our birds, and living nature generally, is a matter of tremendous national and educational importance. Personally I do not admit the evidence which is commonly adduced to prove "native cruelty" in children. But nothing is clearer than the fact that children are instinctively, incessantly, impulsively, explosively active; and, unless all possible channels of beneficent and delightful activity are laid wide open to them, it cannot fail to happen, as Goethe so well says, "Nothing is more terrible than active ignorance" (Nichts ist schrechlicher als eine thätige Unwissenheit"). My own experience with children and that kind of nature study which has some high purpose in it, which really presents to their minds something well worth doing, has led me to repudiate and anathematize as a libel of childhood theories of "native cruelty." These are the loose conclusions of that

desiccated breed of pedagogues who insist on setting before innocent childhood "asinine feasts of sow-thistles and brambles," grinds of minutiæ, technicalities and hard names, "abstractions of logic and metaphysics," "ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge." My experience has been that children always take to knowledge really "worthy and delightful," which offers full scope to their passion for activity, like ducklings to water, like fledglings to the air. If they do not, let us look to the "native cruelty" of our school courses, rather than cover our own stupidity with assumptions of "native cruelty" of childhood.

To put this matter again to the test, the subject of going actively to work rearing and protecting our native birds was presented to one of the Worcester schools. A brief statement was made as to the importance and need of the work and as to the pleasure of having birds about our homes. Practically, the questions then put to the children were: How many would like to have robins or orioles, or bluebirds, swallows or other native birds build their nests near their home? How many would be willing to do everything possible to protect such nests and birds? How many would like to band together, all work together for their neighborhood and have meetings to talk over best ways and means of helping the birds and attracting them about their homes? I must confess that even my own optimism was taken by surprise at the way the children tumbled into it. "Every child in every room in the building" was no uncommon report. Meetings were held at first after school hours once a week, but so many went into it and the work proved its value within a month to such an extent that by special notice of Superintendent Carroll, meetings of the Ten to One Clubs were made a regular part of the nature work and held in school hours. The name Ten to One Clubs was chosen, its significance being to work in every way possible to have ten of our valuable native birds where we have but one now. The first club was organized April 7, 1899, in the ninth grade of the Woodland Street School, Joseph Jackson, Principal. The second was formed the same day in the Upsala Street School. Officers were elected from among the boys and girls, and a simple constitution was framed and adopted. Since this gives the aims and organization, and may be of use to those wishing to form similar clubs, we append the constitution of the Woodland Street Club.

# CONSTITUTION.

MOTTO: *Pro Avibus et Patria.*

## ARTICLE I.

### NAME AND PURPOSE.

SECTION 1. This organization shall be known as the Ten to One Club, Woodland Street School, Grade 9, Section A.

SEC. 2. The object of the club shall be to use every means possible to increase the numbers of our native wild birds by providing them, when necessary, with food, water, shelter and nesting places, by treating them with uniform kindness, and especially by protecting, in every way possible, their nests, eggs and young.

## ARTICLE II.

### MEMBERSHIP.

SECTION 1. Any pupil of the Woodland Street School may become a member by signing the constitution and working for the objects of the club.

## ARTICLE III.

### OFFICERS.

SECTION 1. The officers of the club shall be a president, eight vice-presidents, a secretary and four assistant secretaries and a committee of five on charts and statistics.

### DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

SEC. 2. The duties of the president and secretary shall be those usually attaching to such offices.

SEC. 3. Vice-presidents and assistant secretaries shall perform the duties of their respective chiefs during their absence, or when the club meets in sections.

SEC. 4. The committee on charts and statistics shall make a map of a certain district, to be determined by the club, and keep a

record of the number of birds' nests reported, and the history of each nest, and shall make a report on said map and record at the last meeting of the club in June and November of each year, and at any other time that the club may direct.

## ARTICLE IV.

### MEETINGS.

SECTION 1. The regular meetings of the club shall be held on Friday afternoon of each week at 3.30 o'clock during the school year.

SEC. 2. Special meetings may be held at any time at the call of the president and secretary, with approval of the principal and all the teachers, during the school year, and if held in the school building.

SEC. 3. Ten members shall constitute a quorum.

## ARTICLE V.

### AMENDMENTS.

SECTION 1. This constitution may be amended by a majority vote of those present at any regular meeting, provided that notice of proposed amendment be given at a previous regular meeting.

## BY-LAWS.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

1. Minutes of previous meeting.
2. Reports of committee on charts and statistics (if called for).
3. Reports of special committees.
4. Reports of birds' nests newly discovered.
5. Records of nests previously reported.
6. Suggestions by members as to ways and means for protecting birds, nests and young.
7. Miscellaneous business.

The central idea in the formation of these clubs is to open up channels of beneficent activity which will lead the children, and their parents as well, to the fullest possible enjoyment of the birds about their own homes. It is applying to this field the magical logic that one positive action renders useless all the dull machinery of repression

and punishment. No child who has *done* something to attract birds to his home needs to be told not to do things intended to drive them away.

A brief list of things the boys and girls have actually done may be of interest. They have set out, about their school yards and their homes, a number of those trees, shrubs and plants given in the food chart as most valuable to attract birds and furnish food. This most important work of all is but just begun, but much interest has been aroused in it and the leaven is working. Numbers of children have made bird houses and done everything possible to attract birds to nest in them. In a few cases they have been successful, but they were carefully told at the start that there would not be birds enough to go around this year; that if everybody was careful to protect the nests and young, they might hope to have some another year. They have put out all sorts of nesting material, even to the clippings of their own hair, and have quite generally been delighted by seeing the birds carry it away. Dishes of water and pans of mud have been provided. Numbers of nests have been reported and means of protecting them have been adopted. A number of young birds have been cared for until able to fly and have then been liberated. Injured birds have been restored to health and liberated. Two members of one of the clubs ducked a boy who disturbed a robin's nest until he promised never to do so again. A very sad incident happened in the Elizabeth School Club, where one of the boys had found a loon's nest and had tamed the young so that he could feed them "wet bread" from his hand. This is a rare occurrence, and we began to hope that we might have a family of these most active and beautiful of our aquatic birds to enliven our park waters. Soon, however, the inevitable hoodlum came and shot both loons and carried off the young. One of the "hardest" boys in a school did not come in to the first and second meeting of the club. The third meeting he stayed and joined the club, and the fourth he had something to say about birds he had seen, and recently made the following report: He said that he was helping a farmer mow away hay and there were a number of swallows' nests in the barn. The man asked him if he would not climb up and knock them down. He answered the man, "We learn at our school that swallows are good birds and we have promised to protect their nests all we can, and, if you leave their nests alone, they will catch mosquitoes and flies and all kinds of insects for you and do your farm lots of good." The man

replied: "Well, I had n't thought of that; but I guess you are right, my boy, and we'll leave the nests where they are."

It was intended to introduce this work into one or two schools as an experiment, but soon other schools caught the idea and organized by a delightful sort of spontaneous combustion, until probably not less than 5,000 pupils joined the clubs, and practically every child in the city felt their influence for good.

A number of spontaneous expressions have come to me indicating a living, permanent interest, and we may feel assured that every life thus touched by the magic of positive love, thought, and action, has been "lifted up and strengthened:

> Knowing that Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
> Through all the years of this our life to lead
> From joy to joy: for she can so inform
> The mind that is within us, so impress
> With quietness and beauty, and so feed
> With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings, where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life
> Shall e'er prevail against us or disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings.
>
> —*Wm. Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey.*

PORTION OF TEN TO ONE CLUB, NO. 2. ORGANIZED APRIL 7, 1899, UPSALA STREET SCHOOL, WORCESTER, MASS.
MISS MARY C. HENRY, *Principal*.

All the children in the picture have either put up bird houses or promised to do so this spring

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